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ABSTRACT

The information rich environment of the World Wide Web provides a wealth of opportunities for international and comparative scholars of education to access a variety of electronic resources. These resources come in the form of reports, papers, policy positions, and others, many of which are available full-text if one knows where and how to locate them. This paper answers several questions related to accessing information on the Web, and provides addresses for the sites discussed. Topics include: finding and accessing information on the Web; conducting an effective search using a search engine; finding Web pages in other languages; "Alta Vista Babelfish," a free online translation service; online periodicals (full-text options, magazines, finding journals online); finding online journals related to educational issues; additional data sources (policy institutions, developmental agencies, multilateral organizations, non-governmental agencies) and how to locate organizations online; other electronic services (databases, table of contents alert service); how to subscribe to the multicultural education cluster; listservs; how to retrieve and search the Web via e-mail for those that don't have access to the Web; and the wind-up computer of the future. (AEF)

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Knowledge Acquisition:
Utilizing the Internet to Access Educational Data

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Introduction

Over the last five years, information technology has revolutionized the way in which scholars have the opportunity to access information and data resources. International and comparative education scholars are no different. Yet, many academicians and students remain hesitant to utilize sources from the World Wide Web or to acquire a working understanding of new technological advancements. This paper originated from a desire to aid those wishing to learn more about how to use information technology in order to access electronic resources.

Since its inception in 1989, the number of web sites on the World Wide Web has exploded exponentially. Consequently, more information is available to more people today than at any other time in our history. Such an information rich environment provides a wealth of opportunities for international and comparative scholars of education to access a variety of electronic resources. These resources available on the web come in the form of reports, papers, policy positions, etc.; many of which are available full-text if one knows where and how to locate these resources.

What Do I Need to Find and Access Information on the World Wide Web?

Plug-ins

Before I address how to find information utilizing World Wide Web search engines, there is some vital information about peripheral software that a current researcher needs to be aware of in order to reap the maximum benefit from information on the WWW. One such item is called a plug-in. Plug-Ins are software program that allow the user to download information from the World Wide Web. Without some plug-ins, much information is not available to web searchers. For example, many free documents available on the WWW today are in Portable Document Format (PDF). PDF files can easily be assessed with a plug-in called Acrobat Reader available free at Adobe (http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html). Acrobat Reader is automatically spawned when a user clicks a link (to a document) saved in PDF format. Acrobat Reader is a must to have in today's world of information rich environments. These files are easily recognizable by their .pdf extentsion. Another plug-in which is valuable to have on your PC is a Zip program. Zip programs allow you to access files which have been saved in a compressed format. Several free or preview zip software programs as well as addition plug-ins are available at http://www.shareware.com.

How to Locate Appropriate Plug-Ins

If you attempt to obtain a document on the WWW which requires a specific plug-in (and you don't have that particular plug-in) then Netscape will react by placing a message a message on your screen informing you that your computer is not equipped with that software program. Click on the button which is written

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"Find Out More." This will provide you with information about the plug-in as well as how to download a copy of the needed software. After you have downloaded the plug-in you will have to find the program to load it and then restart your machine.

How Do I Find Information on the WWW?

Most of you have probably utilized a search engine such as (http://www.yahoo.com) Yahoo or Webcrawler (http://www.webcrawler.com). A search engine allows users to search for web sites on the World Wide Web. When the user searches for key words or a phrase, the search engine provides a list of potentially useful links to visit. Search engines work by receiving suggested sites (normally by the web master or creator of a site) so many web pages through out the world are not on every search engine. Consequently, by utilizing a variety of search engines, an individual will increase the likelihood of a thorough and useful search. Infoseek (http://www.infoseek.com), the second most visited search engine in the world, offers a free software download which will allow you to search directly from your browser window. Infoseek Quickseek (http://www.infoseek.com/iseek?pg=quickseek/Download.html) will definitely save you search time and increase your research efficient.

Alta Vista and Yahoo as well as several other search engines support searches in other nations; look at the bottom of the main search page. In addition to those international engines are several multilingual search engines. These allow user to search in terms and key words from a variety of languages.

How Do I Conduct an Effective Search Using a Search Engine?

Be sure to use quotations for exact phrases or words (in order) you are looking for. For example, a search for *Russian education* on Infoseek yields over 9 million links because the search was Russian and education. For more exact searching, utilize quotations. Using quotes by searching for "*Russian education*" returned 158 links. In addition, each search engine maintains a search tip or search help page. Click on the link and read how that particular search is most effective.

How Do I Find Web Pages in Other Languages?

One example is Alta Vista Digital (http://www.altavista.com) which can search for web sites in the following languages: Cesky, Chinese, Dansk, Deutsch, English, Eesti, Français, Español, Greek, Hebrew, Islenska, Italiano, Japanese, Korean, Latviski, Lietuviskai, Magyar, Nederlands, Norsk, Português, Polski, Româna, Russkij, Svenska and Suomi.

In addition to Alta Vista Digital, Euroseek (http://www.euroseek.net) can conduct searches in over twenty-five languages. Euroseek can search in the following languages: Brezhoneg, Balgarski, Català, Cesky, Cymraeg, Dansk, Deutsch, Eesti, Ellinika, English, Esperanto, Español, Euskara, Vlaams, Français, Frysk, Galego, Gàidhlig, Hrvatski, Islenska, Ivrit, Italiano, Latviski, Lietuviskai, Magyar, Macedonski, Malti, Nederlands, Norsk, Português, Polski, Româna, Russkij, Slovencina, Slovenscina, Shqip, Srpski, Svenska, Suomi and Türkçe.

Alta Vista Babelfish: On-line Translation Tool

Alta Vista Babelfish (http://babelfish.altavista.com) is a free on-line translation service which provides translations of entire web pages or translation of inputted text. Babelfish can be utilized to locate web pages on a variety of educational topics written in German, Spanish, Italian, French or Portuguese. With the help of Alta Vista Babelfish, you can find a plethora of search engines in the five languages as well as periodicals, papers and other resources. (see how to utilize this service on the next page)

How to Find Educational Web Sites in German, Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese

1. Visit the Babelfish web page and type the English word or phrase in the Babelfish window.

2. Choose translate from English to one of five languages. Click the translate button.

3. When the term of phrase is returned highlight and copy. Go to Alta Vista (http://www.altavist.digital.com) or Euroseek (http://www.euroseek.net), paste the term in the search window and choose search in the language of choice.

4. If using Alta Vista search, all links are translatable by simply clicking translate.

5. If using Euroseek, you should first open up a new browser window as to work with two web sites simultaneously. After the search returns links, you must copy the search URL and paste this into Babelfish. Choose translate from English to language of choice. Once search is translated all links will automatically load into Babelfish for translation.

What Types of Information is Available through the Internet?

On-line Periodicals

As we approach 1999, the influence of the World Wide Web can be seen on traditional and magazine publishers are beginning to offer services for subscribers as well as as those who visit their website. Services include full-text versions of articles published in the past as well as upcoming table of contents.

Full-Text Options

Periodicals

As we move toward the twenty-first century, more periodical publishers are providing full-text articles on-line. One example of this trend is the publisher Triangle. Triangle Journals publishes a variety of educational journals including International Studies in the Sociology of Education, Curriculum Studies and Oxford Studies in Comparative Education. Triangle currently is releasing on-line for free access many journal volumes published after 1997 in portable document format (as discussed above). To see the complete line of journals and access the free on-line publications visit Triangle Journals at http://www.triangle.co.uk/index.htm

How to Find Journals On-line

Try visiting the web site of journals. The next time you look at a hard copy of a periodical examine the publishers information. Often the journal URL will be printed on the inside front or back cover. If you are unable to locate a URL, then make note of the journal publisher. Use a search engine to search for the name of the journal. After searching for the URL visit their home page to determine the potential of full-text journal articles.

Magazines

Similar to scholarly publications, many magazines are becoming available full-text on-line. At least, you will find recent and past table of contents. One prime example of a magazine supporting on-line technology is

the Atlantic Monthly (http://www.theatlantic.com) which offers an on-line archive of many topic related articles. For example, you can find an on-line articles by Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois. Look through the education archive (http://www.theatlantic.com/election/connection/educatio/educatio.htm)

as well as other related topics such as the economy, politics, race or gender.

On-line Journals

Many journals have emerged on the World Wide Web. Normally these are comprised of two types: web only versions and electronic publishing projects. Web only journals comprise a rapid growing sector of the World Wide Web. One such example is the Electronic Policy Analysis Archives located at http://epaa.asu.edu. EPAA has published original scholarly articles since 1993 and has been access more than 250,000 times. It is an excellent source for issues of education in the United States but has grown recently in regard to internationally related educational issues.

Another type of on-line only journal is the Electronic Policy Network available at http://epn.org. While the EPAA publishes original articles, the EPN searches reform and policy institute web sites for on-line material. EPN maintains sections on economics and politics, education, media, health as well as civic participation. In addition, EPN provides links and information to a variety of scholarly web sites, publishers and on-line papers. EPN education (http://epn.org/idea/education.html) provides a bimonthly update of critical issues in American education; it is an excellent source for educational policy scholars and students. EPN also maintains an archive on educational issues.

Some on-line journals are supported through an electronic publishing program designed to offer on-line versions of traditional journals. One example of an electronic publishing project is MUSE housed at Johns Hopkins University. MUSE (http://muse.jhu.edu/muse.html) has full-text access to more than thirty journals including the Journal of Higher Education and the Journal of Democracy. Users can search the complete collection with title or key word searches. Another excellent source for a variety of full-text journals is JSTOR (http://www.jstor.org). JSTOR has journals from economics, sociology, education, anthropology, Asian studies, political science, etc. JSTOR allows a user to search its entire collection for key education words. Check the availability of JSTOR and MUSE at your local campus library. Many other on-line sites are supported by higher education institutions. Know what your library offers you in regard to information access.

How Do I Find On-line Journals Related to Educational Issues?

Some journals that are valuable for those involved in scholarly international and comparative education research are found in disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, anthropology, economics, history, etc. Search for materials in these disciplines utilizing a search engine. One example of an on-line sociology journal with many educational related articles is the Sociological Research Online available at: http://kennedy.soc.surrey.ac.uk/socresonline.

Additional valuable sociology & anthropology web sites include the following:

- http://www.sociology.org
- http://www.asanet.org/soe/
- http://www.socsciresearch.com/
- http://sosig.esrc.bris.ac.uk/
- http://www.ixpres.com/lunatic/soc.html
- http://www.usc.edu/dept/v-lib/anthropology.html

- http://www.ercomer.org/wwwvl/index.html
- http://www.alcazar.com/wwwvl_idc/index.html
- http://www.fisk.edu/vl/HumanRights/Overview.html
- http://www.lib.umich.edu/libhome/Documents.center/stsoc.html
- http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/

Additional Data Sources: Alternative Web Resources

Institutions, Developmental Agencies, NGOs

Policy institutions, developmental agencies and non-governmental agencies are some of the best locations for education or education related documents, papers and policy statements on education. Since these entities want to influence the public sphere, many documents are available at the organization's web site.

Policy Institutes

One example of an institute conducting educational policy research is RAND. RAND (http://www.rand.org/AREAS/index.html) maintains a web site with many publications and reports available free in portable document format. In addition to many other relevant topics and regions throughout the world, RAND also supports an education page (http://www.rand.org/centers/iet).

Multilateral Organizations

Another group of organizations that maintain web sites replete with a wealth of free research and data are international donor agencies. The most well known multilateral donor is the World Bank (http://www.worldbank.org). At the World Bank web site, you can search for an issue, learn more about a specific nations or region or you can enter the Topics in Development page with links to Education or the Early Childhood Development. All multilateral and bilateral donor maintain web sites. Some of the most well known include:

- USAID (http://www.info.usaid.gov/regions)
- Asian Development Bank (http://www.asiandevbank.org)
- United Nations Development Programme (http://www.undp.org)
- UNICEF (http://www.unicef.org)
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (http://www.oecd.org)
- Organization of American States (http://www.oas.org)
- Canadian International Development Association (http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/index.htm)
- International Development Research Centre (http://www.idrc.ca).

Ministries of Education

One major source for educational updates in a country is the Ministry of Education of that nation. In addition, many governmental agencies are including English language pages on their web site. An excellent example is the Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culutre (http://www.mkm.hu/). Most documents are available in both English as well as Hungarian. Search for "ministry of education" and then the country of choice.

Other organization: Development and Non-Governmental Organizations

Another group of organizations which have web sites offering many policy statements, research or papers on education non-governmental organizations. Since these entities are interested in changing educational policy and other issues, their web sites are filled with a plethora of information and data. For example, the Electronic Development and Environment Information System (http://nt1.ids.ac.uk/eldis) offers a large number of full-text documents web links and bibliographies on major issues. ELDIS subject guides include education, children, development, developmental aid, regional and global resources as well as a number of educational related subject areas.

How to Locate Organizations On-line

In order to locate policy institutes, Non-governmental organization or multilateral donor agencies, search for their full name on a web search engine or search for "educational policy", "educational policy institutes", "development", "developmental aid", "aid organizations", etc.

Other Electronic Services

Databases

With the advent of the WWW came an increase in the quantity and quality of data available on-line. Many types of databases are available on-line including census, population, social science and other types of data. For example, CESSDA - Council of European Social Science Data Archives (http://www.nsd.uib.no/cessda/europe.html) maintains links to social science data archives throughout Europe, North America as well as other parts of the world. Try a search for databases or statistics.

Table of Contents Alert Service

Many journal publishers are beginning to provide an electronic service alerting readers of journal updates and upcoming table of contents. On example of this type of service is offered by Carfax. Carfax, headquartered in the United Kingdom, publishes hundred of scholarly journals. The Scholarly Articles Research Alerting (SARA) service allows a user to subscribe to several clusters of journals within certain topic areas. For example, within education, Carfax publishes journals within the following areas: Assessment, Comparative Education, Drama and English, Educational Policy, Education Research, Further Education, Higher Education, Moral and Religious Education, Multicultural Education, Sociology of Education, Special Needs, and Teacher Education. Within each of these journal areas, Carfax published several journals which is referred to as a cluster.

How to subscribe to the SARA

Visit the Carfax web site at http://www.carfax.co.uk/s-sarah.htm and determine the content area and particular clusters you are interested in subscribing to. For example, if you wanted to subscribe to the multicultural education cluster, then you would send a message to SARA@Carfax. In the body of the message, they would type the following message: SUBSCRIBE MULTICULTURAL-EDUCATION-C

By visiting a particular journal's web site, you can probably determine if the journal has such an electronic alerting service. Try searching at a web search engine (e.g., Infoseek, Yahoo, etc.) for the journal title.

Listservs

Listservs or e-mail distribution lists have been a trusty way to remain informed in the world of international and comparative education. Many lists are active and can be found by searching for listservs on a search engine or by visiting a variety of international development, international education, institutes or non-governmental organizations web sites. Many of these entities support an educational e-mail distribution list that you can join. For example, electronic forums such as ComparEd and ChinaEducation are available to potential users. Try to search for "international education" and then a search for "listserv" or vice-versa.

How to Find International and Comparative Education Listservs

Use the Following E-Mail Distribution List Search Engines

- http://www.n2h2.com/KOVACS/
- http://www.lsoft.com/lists/listref.html
- http://www.liszt.com/
- http://www.neosoft.com/internet/paml/byname.html

For some higher education listservs go to (http://apollo.gmu.edu/~jmilam/listservs/international.html).

How to subscribe to ComparEd or ChinaEducation

Send a message to majordomo@hkuska.hku.hk. In the body of the message type subscribe [listname] [your e-mail]. Visit http://www.hku.hk/cerc for more information.

What Do I Do Without Access to the World Wide Web?

Telephone and PC densities (i.e., the number of items per 100 persons) in many nations remain quite low. Consequently, main individuals around the world have little of no access to the information superhighway. Yet, what mechanism are available to aid those who little opportunity to connect to the WWW.

E-Mail Only

Many scholars in Africa and Latin America have access to e-mail only or deal with connection baud rates which are extremely slow. Consequently, alternative methods are needed to provide them with access to information. One such method is entitled "Get Web" (http://www.bellanet.org/email.html) provided by the International Development Research Centre. In an effort to support communication and information development in areas with only e-mail, Get Web provides usersthe opportunity to search the WWW as well as retrieve pages from the web.

How to Retrieve and Search the WWW through E-Mail

Send a message to getweb@unganisha.idrc.ca. In the body of the message, type GET URL. For example, if you wanted the following page http://www.indiana.edu, then you would type GET http://www.indiana.edu. In addition, the following are available to send web pages to e-mail accounts:

- getweb@usa.healthnet.org
- agora@dna.affrc.go.jp Use Send rather than GET
- agora@www.eng.dmu.ac.uk Use Send rather than GET
- agora@kamakura.mss.co.jp Use Send rather than GET
- agora@uit.no Use Send rather than GET
- 3mail@gmd.de

Future Access: the Wind-up Computer

In 1991, Trevor Baylis created a wind-up radio (http://www.britannia.com/panorama/invent.html). After watching a show on the lack of electricity in Africa, Baylis decided to work on a device which would allow communication to occur without electricity. Since then he has created a wind-up flash light and is currently working on a wind-up lap-top with General Electric which would provide personal computing and access to information to those with limited technology and inconsistent electricity. Baylis' idea was to wind-up a small motor backwards. As the motor runs forward it creates its own energy. International and comparative educators interested in education in developing nations should continue to stay abreast of the development of technological advancements involving information. Wind-up radios as well as PCs can delivery instructions well as provide access to information as well. Consequently, these can be utilized in future developmental projects involving education.